

150 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN IRELAND

434 the children upon the home farm and the role of the dis-
593 persed children in helping the old couple and the brother
or sister at home is part of the general "friendliness" by
which the Irish countryman sums up the family obligations.
The two roles are felt to be the same, and they are described
in the same terms, as the obligations of actual charity be-
tween country families, agricultural coöperation, and cere-
monial assistance at marriages, wakes, and funerals. Brother
and sister send back gifts to the home farm, especially when
[431] the old couple are still alive. Gifts of money, clothing, and
presents of all descriptions are sent back. Geese, farm deli-
cacies, and such mementos as shamrocks go from the farm
to those relatives that keep in touch.

593 At family crises, such as death, marriage, and birth, the
602 new bonds come strongly into play and, where possible, the
167 dispersed relatives come back to the farm at that time. The
484 emigrant returns, if he does so at all, to the very townland
of his birth, either to buy the old place or to settle near-by.
In fact, there are many instances of countrymen, returned
Americans, Australians, South Africans, and British soldiers,
who have roamed over the world but have never seen more
of Ireland than their route to and from their port of em-
barkation and the nearest market towns.

593 The sentiments of place, farm, and family become so in-
152 extricably intermingled as to be almost one. Perhaps the
533 peculiarly Irish type of song and music owes its character
as well as its popularity to that fact. The laments for a dear
one, especially a mother, and the pangs of exile are the
major motives. They are sung to the same tunes and call
forth the same tears.

593 The break-up of the family at the transfer of land has
changed the relation between the dispersed children and
the old couple, just as it has changed that between the new
farm family and their parents. Control of expenditure, in
fact all vestiges of the strict parental control, is perforce

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573 in the group. Comments and questions are phrased through
521 him. He takes the preferred verbal bit and passes it on
among the others. And when agreement is finally reached,
it is his quiet "So it is" that settles the point for good.

573 O'Halloran sits on the hob across the hearth from him.
He is the "drawer-down" in the scheme of jocular titles
which includes most of the group. O'Halloran is a man of
fifty but mature. He owns a farm a little better perhaps
[592] than most, just beyond the village. He works it with his
wife and six children, the eldest of whom is nearing twenty.
As he has no parents left alive, he is the "old man" and the
man of the house. But individually he is more. "He has a
great head on him," they say. He has had a somewhat wider
experience, once having traveled as a salesman over the
roads of southern Ireland. Yet, in spite of the fact that he
is occasionally a little skeptical and his politics are some-
what suspect to the villagers, who are today De Valera men
to a man, he is emphatically one of them.

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573 His title of "drawer-down" is an apt one. O'Halloran
521 seeks information. He most frequently of them all brings
up points of interest and questions of the day. These he
addresses to O'Donoghue, who passes them on for general
discussion. Like all the rest of them his illustrations are apt
and his anecdotes definite and precise, but his chief role is
to "draw the talk down" to common levels of interest which
allow all to take part.

573 O'Loughlin usually occupies the other hob. He has no
521 real place here. He is a bachelor, aged fifty or so, and,
589 though he comes here, he has little to say. He is seemingly
silent all the time, and he breaks his silence only to add to
unanimity. For O'Loughlin is very poor and lives alone.
Having no family, he can neither coor nor work his land to
best advantage. And occasionally he works on the road,
breaking stones with the boys of the village. Just as he has
no voice here, he has no title either.

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part of a new economics which brings distributing agencies²³⁴
to the farmer's door. Consequently they do not fit this pic-⁴³⁸
ture and are among the great forces of gradual change.
They have made dairying the pursuit of the farm father,
as it was not before. Like motor lorries, they represent
the new geographic order that is gradually overcoming the
old.

The goods that reach the farmer cover distances between⁴³⁸
their ultimate distributing center and consumer in the farm⁴⁶²
families in the same proportion as they are bound in with⁴⁸⁴
the statuses and relationships in work and life of the familis-
tically organized groups. The men go to the larger towns
with or without their wives for the larger annual purchases
of boots and cloth goods or furniture or tools and imple-
ments. The boys may go for the more ordinary purchases
of flour and foodstuffs and feeds and so on, to be bought
in their fathers' names, to the local centers and villages.
The household needs from day to day are the women's
province. Tallow, candles, oil, sugar, tea, are to be had
either in the villages or in the crossroad centers. The only
need the men may fill so close to home is the recurrent
hunger for tobacco and drink.

If we turn this view of travel and distribution and per-
sonal relationship into generality, we see that the pattern
is such that it fits those of community life we have described.
In the masculine sphere of life the disposal of produce
means masculine travel and masculine building of relation-
ship with the outside world of greatest geographical range.
Taking each item of masculine produce in the descending
order of its importance to the farm families, the area out of
which the product is brought to a center is progressively
smaller. The same fact is true of the feminine produce,
with the difference, of course, that the range is smaller to
begin with. The area of widest contacts established by
women and the areas drawn upon by women and the areas

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438 drawn upon by centers of distribution of women's produce
462 are always much less in extent than those of men.

● 484 It is not enough to point out that the distance to be
traveled and the size of the area which a center serves are in
438 direct proportion to the monetary value of the goods con-
484 cerned. This is the case. It is an old story among economists.
571 But like all generalities it does not fail to have many excep-
tions. The point of interest is not the monetary but the
sociological aspect of the matter.

Areas of distributive service coincide roughly with areas
of personal contact and habitual travel. They coincide also
with areas of effective social relationship. Thus there is
a direct correlation between the area over which a peasant
moves and has social relations and the value of the product
he raises, as the economist would point out. But the source
of this correlation is not to be found in economic considera-
tions alone. The economic matters are themselves the
outcome of the patterning of activities between persons.
They show us the interdependence of the internal organiza-
tion of the peasant community and the relationships making
that community's articulation with the outside world.

Nothing in the world prevents any small farmer from
going to Dublin markets to sell his cattle, not even the price
of the ticket, for he has that. But he goes only so rarely as
to make the fact negligible. On the other hand, the big
farmer, the cattleman, in County Clare habitually goes
farther, buying and selling far beyond the confines of the
local market areas, purchasing his household and family
goods in the great urban centers, patronizing even a Dublin
tailor sometimes. The difference in travel is a part once
again of the difference by class and economy between large
farmer and small. The small farmer's community is made
up of the persons related to him who are also small farmers
and the persons who connect these men with the outside
world. This we saw in the discussion of occupations. The

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market areas are the areas of effective, habitual relationship among farmers. They are definable only in terms of social relations made up of the acts of specific local persons. Such relations differ in duration and the frequency of the events making them up. Change such relations and geography is changed. For a human setting geography is merely the locus of relationship. The system of distribution that orders space in rural Ireland functions to do so within a system of social relations, which we have called familism. 438 484 571

It is not surprising that the relationships existing between the small farmers and their local distributing agencies go farther by far than economic acts of barter, purchase, and sale. The country crossroad shopkeepers, especially, win very special status in rural communities out of these relationships. In Ireland and in Clare shopkeeping is predominantly an urban and small-town trade. Yet shops are numerous and important in the country districts, and a word must be said of them. 444 571

In typical western rural communities the smallest and poorest of the crossroad shops, serving the minutest areas, are ordinary cottages or farmhouses. The slightest alteration has sufficed to turn one of the rooms into an emporium where makeshift till, counter, and shelves carry little more than tobacco, matches, oil, and a few sweets and small sundries. 444

Such a shop is usually run by a woman, who subsists upon it and a plot of land or garden. She is often a widow, or the wife of a local tradesman. In many cases the little shop is the local post office as well, and a salary from the state contributes to the owner's upkeep. Such a shop is sometimes, too, a local gathering place for the boys, in the way the local smithy once was such a gathering place. The boys get their fags here. It is incumbent upon the woman who keeps the shop to make them presents at Christmas time, in recognition of their custom. Everyone agrees that the woman [205] [431]

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gives advantage to the buyer rather than to themselves, they would change nothing in it. Prowess in bargaining is recognized and valued in every person. A man who is a good hand at bargaining or a good intermediary between bargainners soon makes a name for himself. The man who can drive a hard bargain gets a hearty respect from his neighbors and wins a grudging respect even from his victims, but the man who lets himself be bested wins scant sympathy. At the same time, however, sharp or unfair practice soon wins condemnation.

All this lore the child learns as he does man's work. He is taken to fairs from the age of ten or so and stands on the fair green or in the streets the long hours from dawn until the last buyer leaves. He learns from actual experience and finds his lessons reviewed again and again in the constant discussion at home and on *cuaird* of prices, buyers, famous bargains and bargainners.

At home the approach of a fair leaves no doubt as to the importance of the event. Farmers talk of prospects for days ahead. Each man is asked what he intends to try to sell, and the merits and prospects of each beast are common coin. Every man hazards his opinion as to what prices will be, how they will compare with those of recent fairs in surrounding villages, and what beasts will find the readiest market. In the light of all this discussion the ordinary farmer makes up his mind either to try his luck or wait for a better chance.

Should he decide to try his luck in the coming fair, he has a well-established procedure to follow. He gathers his stock together, gives them any special attention they may need. If the fair is a long way off, he drives his bullocks and heifers halfway there the day before and puts them overnight in the field of a "friend" along the road. In this he has the aid of a boy or a "friend," after the pattern of kinship reciprocities.

On the day of the fair he is up as early as one or two in the

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443 morning. To dress, snatch a cup of tea, and bless himself
444 takes only a moment. Usually he has arranged for com-
panionship, and he and his neighbors drive their beasts
along the roads together. Company makes the night less
lonely and the handling of the animals easier. Driving them
is a skilled task against the dangers of the road, both natural
and eerie. The men hope to reach the site of the fair before
daybreak. They want to arrive in time to find a "good
pitch," as they call it. They want to take their stand in the
drawn-up lines of men and beasts where buyers are most
likely to notice them. His pitch taken, each man stands
over his beasts, ready for the inspection of buyers, careful
that his beasts do not wander off or get mixed up with the
others.

443 As dawn breaks, the buyers arrive. They are nearly always
438 cattle dealers and big farmers. Only occasionally are they
local men. One can recognize them as they hurry about,
[291] businesslike, wearing trench coat, bowler, and leggings.
The costume is practically a uniform with them, quite dif-
ferent from the drab coats and boots of the countrymen.
They carry chalk or scissors and pencils and a notebook
to mark the beasts of their choice and record their purchases.

In the good days of high prices, as during the World War,
the buyers arrive even before dawn and buy by lantern
light. All the good beasts of the fair may be gone by the
time the sun comes up. On occasions of little demand, how-
ever, the buyers have time to look about carefully and make
the exhaustive tests of quality that long experience has con-
vinced them are the secret of commercial success.

443 The procedure of choice, bargaining, and sale is as un-
437 changing a ritual as any church provides. The buyer —
dealer or farmer — strolls unconcernedly along the lines of
farmers and their beasts. Here and there he greets an ac-
quaintance. But he is appraising the animals all the while.
Rigid custom forbids his breaking in on a bargain already

000 problems. The range of commodities
 433 available on the island is restricted.
 But the farms are similar to those in
 Connemara, and the fishing—especially
 for lobsters—may in some years be
 distinctly profitable. Peat is still avail-
 able and no coal is imported. Once the
 peat is used up, it is hard to maintain
 existence on these remote islands. And
 if the population diminishes to very
 small numbers, its very maintenance
 may become precarious or impossible
 as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's
 434 present population is maintained partly
 657 by the help of various government
 167 schemes, by the remittances of relatives,
 or—in comparatively few instances—
 by periodic spells of residence in Eng-
 land to make money as laborers or
 domestic servants. Incidentally, the
 [191] people are entirely English-speaking:
 the Irish speech was lost almost 60
 years ago.

291 Home spinning and weaving of fab-
 438 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was
 [286] noted that most of the clothing was
 made from "homespun and home-dyed
 woollen fabrics" but that "imported
 shop clothes of inferior quality" were
 replacing them.* Inishbofin people have
 no longer the homespun clothes still
 worn by the people of the Aran islands
 in Galway Bay: only one old woman
 was seen in the traditional red skirt
 (or petticoat) dyed with imported mad-
 der. Clothes are now bought in the
 local shops, or during occasional visits
 to Clifden, which is "town" to the
 islanders, or to Galway, or from mail
 order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
 ● 484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a
 hooker and seven miles along a road
 with no public conveyance, and Galway
 [497] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light
 railway was closed in 1925.

*C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inish-
 bofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc.
 Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893-96,
 p. 354.

[p. 203(B)]

[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

443 creameries or to dealers brings useful
489 income. The difficulty lies in transport,
especially during the winter when the
isolation is most acutely felt.

484 Fourth, remote and isolated as their
island may be, some of its people have
seen much of the world. It is unlikely
that many of the young people will re-
main here in the future; on the other
hand, some former emigrants have come
back to rest with thankfulness after
their labors elsewhere. As one of them
said, "America is a good place for the
young, but this is a good place when
you're old."

000 To summarize, Inishbofin now is
neither a tragic island nor a romantic
enclave of ancient ways. It is an area
in which the work begun by the Con-
gested Districts Board has borne fruit,
whose people live reasonably well by
crofting standards thanks to the help
of emigrants and of the state. So long
as the fuel holds out, there seems to be
no reason why this island should not
remain inhabited; but the problems of
so curious a population age structure
(p. 208) need investigation by a sociol-
ogist, and the cost of maintaining this
community to the state and its relatives
could well form a subject for an econ-
omist. For this island is not, and
presumably cannot be, self-supporting
under modern conditions.

[p. 209(B)]

HEARTH AND HOME

354 washed jambs of a stone chimney (Fig. 19) the simple wrought-iron crane has the simple beauty of fitness to purpose which most hand-made things possess. The smith rarely attempted the decorative scrolls which were more suited to light objects such as oatcake toasters. From the cranes must hang the mighty iron pots, some with a capacity of 25 gallons, to hold food for man and beast. One hears of examples which were [406] literally 'cranes', fitted with a windlass and chain to lift pots on and off the fire. Such capacious vessels could not have come into use had the fire not been at floor level.

The adjustable pot-hanger which hooks on to the arm of the crane is a simple but effective device for adjusting the height of the hanging pot (Fig. 20). Like so many of the culture-elements we are describing in this book, it apparently belongs to the Atlantic fringes of Europe. While it could be a medieval or later introduction to Ireland, research may show that it is a Celtic trait (fire-irons are a ritual feature of early Celtic cultures) which has found its last refuge in the open hearths of the west. The crane and other fire-irons and the very soot that [372] clings to them have been regarded with superstitious reverence by virtue of their association with fire. Soot carried in the pocket, [484] for example, gave protection on a journey. More ancient in origin than the crane is the hanging chain suspended from a crook-stick and terminating in a movable pot-hook (crook). From existing examples one could work out a plausible evolutionary sequence of hangings from the roof-suspension which can still be seen in the black-houses of the Hebrides. The sequence begins with a wooden peg stuck high in the back wall of the fire, giving way to a transverse bar set parallel to the wall in the smoke canopy, which might in turn become the arm of the crane. These crook-sticks are said to have been made of holly. The long chain of the first example certainly gives more 'play' than the short suspension from a chimney bar, but the peg is more inaccessible and this supports the contention that it is a survival of the long hanging from the roof-timbers over a chimneyless central hearth.

Pots and pans and other hearth-gear we shall discuss in the next chapter, but here we should notice some further architectural fittings of the partitioned fireside. On one side of the

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inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

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17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

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[133] which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—
[137] of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which com-
[361] pose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.
[417]

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a
[105] "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the
[206] seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former
[871] coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which
[759] employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who
[288] resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the
[464] only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the
[502] narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies,
[793] passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island
at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less
[177] cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due
[178] to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has
[505] had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the
[131] tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer
is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes,
which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can dis-
cover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland
than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG HISTORY AND CULTURE²

[17] The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in
[211] a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including
Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery
grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age prom-
ontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries,
stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house
built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that
the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[101] ² The culture described herein is that of 1959-1960 and excludes important
[121] changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the intro-
duction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland,
and free secondary education.

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593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts
to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
• [488] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make
infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly
women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs,
play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period
when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of
kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with
men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now
they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some
of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis
Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they
are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings in-
cludes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and
animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions.
Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping
and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most
formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial
mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape
and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
1775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are
frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought
to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as
a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of
witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three
persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

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562 recess play and movement to and from school. During church services,
834 there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys
[858] and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The
[864] pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female
teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training
and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnogra-
[443] phers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is
more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and
drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be
found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male
[484] tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers
[526] "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—
[291] a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual
[832] catharsis.
[184]

154 It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustra-
[839] tion among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggres-
[272] sion theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism,
[733] disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be
[578] linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed
that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital
83 coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the
584 manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—
"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur,
832 but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on
"petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them
kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their
[771] "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience
[626] pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the con-
[783] fessional because of their fear of the priest.

833 We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A
considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is
stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the
lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated
[291] by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse
takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is
[12] achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I
must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a
limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior
least freely discussed.)

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Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

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589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much
gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the
consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match
because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to
marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible
within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions
that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession,
only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last
moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950-1959 period,
the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.

[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a
far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since

182 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the
582 great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation
for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should
be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by

829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-
grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty,
an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (ex-
hilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes

582 from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
[586] articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in
Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It